



NOAA Community-based Restoration Program



Sennebec Dam Removal Union, Maine

Sennebec Pond on the St. George River is an important part of daily life for many residents of Union, Maine. Community members and visitors enjoy boating, swimming and fishing on this lake that was raised 3 feet by the construction of Sennebec Dam in 1916. Unfortunately Sennebec Dam also blocked passage to over half the St. George watershed for Atlantic salmon, alewife, shad, eel and river herring. This project is an example of how new technology and consensus building can lead to a solution that benefits both humans and migratory fish.

The St. George River is a medium-size watershed in mid-coast Maine that historically supported runs of Atlantic Salmon. By the end of the 20th century, Sennebec Dam was the only remaining barrier to anadromous species in the watershed. Even before Sennebec Dam was removed, the St. George River supported one of the largest runs of alewife in Maine. These runs support a local commercial fishery for alewife, supply abundant lobster bait and contribute forage for other species in the river, Penobscot Bay and the Gulf of Maine. A small number of Atlantic salmon are now using the very limited habitat below the dam, indicating the potential for more salmon in the future given the increased access to higher quality and more abundant habitat.



18-foot high Sennebec Dam, impassable to migratory fish.



When flooded, the newly constructed roughened ramp will look and function like a natural riffle system, allowing fish passage and maintaining Sennebec Pond's water level.

Trout Unlimited, with substantial NOAA funding, removed the dam and replaced it with a roughened fish ramp about .25 miles upstream. This approach resulted in 17 miles of available fish habitat on the St. George River, while maintaining water levels in Sennebec Pond. Removing the dam increased safety below the dam, while the roughened fish ramp reduced maintenance costs and maintained the recreational value of Sennebec Pond.

Trout Unlimited, with its dedicated Georges River Chapter, has spearheaded this project from the beginning. The NOAA Community-based Restoration Program has contributed over \$100,000 to this \$270,000 project through partnerships with the FishAmerica Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Gulf of Maine Council and Trout Unlimited.

For additional information, contact:

Jeff Reardon
Trout Unlimited
(207) 373-0700
jreardon@tu.org, www.tu.org

Eric Hutchins
NOAA Restoration Center
(978) 281-9313
Eric.Hutchins@noaa.gov, www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration